

# GRAY MATTERS

News of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute | Sonoma State University

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## IT'S TIME TO THRIVE, SURVIVE, AND CHALLENGE OUR MINDS

I think we are all very happy that 2020 is behind us. We all dealt with numerous changes in our lives including loss of loved ones, isolation from friends, family, and neighbors, and we missed the many events and activities that make our lives enjoyable. I know I missed movie outings, concerts, graduations, vacations, weddings, restaurants, summer music, family celebrations, and backyard barbecues, to name a few. Let's just say all of these things will be on my "to do" list for 2021.



How about you? How will you make 2021 a better year? Our lives will gradually improve in the coming months with the vaccine's availability to all of us. How will you enjoy this beautiful thing called life in 2021? What is on your "bucket list"? Here are a few ideas:

**See people!** Meet up with the friends and family you have missed this past year when it's safe. Have a gathering, meet for coffee or drinks, give them a call, take walks together, meet at an outdoor music event.

**Get active!** Take a walk, take a hike, enjoy the coast, take a drive through the beautiful scenic areas of Sonoma County and surroundings.

**Show gratitude!** Thank the people you meet at stores, restaurants, your doctor's office, your neighbors' houses, and anyone you meet when you are out and about. It has been a tough year; show you care and smile! We can tell when people smile even in a mask.

**Explore!** Enjoy local and distant travel when we safely can. Now more than ever I want to travel more and see the places on my bucket list, whether local or long distance. Even a staycation sounds pretty good right now.

**Don't take things for granted!** I think before 2020, we took our lives and way of life for granted – I know I did. Let's appreciate what and who we have in our lives more than ever. Reach out to those that need our help, enjoy each other's company, and remember "we are all in this together."

**Take a class.... Learn something new!** Whether it is a class with OLLI, or another learning opportunity, never stop learning. A quote I heard the other day said this: "We learn to live....therefore we live to learn." Let us never stop learning!

**Volunteer!** We have realized how much we need each other this past year. Reach out and help one another, whether it is with our time, or with donations, reach out to local organizations or individuals that need help.

**Hug!** One thing I have missed this past year is the hug. I am from a family of huggers, so we hug everyone. If you aren't a hugger, an elbow bump will suffice.

**Let's take care of one another and start 2021 in a positive way. We will soon resume many of the activities that we love, and hopefully OLLI will have in person classes in the fall. In the meantime, stay safe and take care.**

Leslie Brutocao, *Director*

**Do you have ideas for the OLLI@SSU's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary? Our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is on September 10, 2021.**

Share your ideas with Leslie Brutocao at [brutocal@sonoma.edu](mailto:brutocal@sonoma.edu). We do not know when we will resume in person activities, so we are looking for virtual and in-person ideas.

**Know someone that would enjoy a winter class?**

They can call 707-664-2691 to register and we will send the video of the 1<sup>st</sup> week's class!

## BOOKS TO READ – FROM OPRAH MAGAZINE, TIME, AND THE NEW YORK TIMES



*Nick* by Michael Farris Smith – A look at life before Gatsby. The man behind the narrator.

*The Push* by Ashley Audrain – A thriller about a mother and her daughter.

*Outlawed* by Anna North – A different version of the late 1800's in America with a courageous heroine.

*Aftershocks: A Memoir* by Nadia Owusu – winner of a Whiting Award – arriving in New York, and finding the strength to start anew.

*The Prophets* by Robert Jones, Jr. – “May this book cast its spell on all of us, restore to us some memory of our most warrior and softest selves.” –*The New York Times Book Review*

*The House on Vesper Sands* by Paraic O'Donnell – A thrilling gothic mystery

*Let me Tell You What I Mean* by Joan Dideon – A collection of essays from 1968 through 2000 (due out Jan. 26)

*Just As I Am: A Memoir* by Cicely Tyson – Reflections on her life, now 96 years old

*A Swim in the Pond in the Rain* by George Saunders – A look at storytelling by four Russian Masters

*Summer Water* by Sarah Moss – Best Book of the Year in the UK. “A sharp tale of suspense” (Margaret Tablot, *The New Yorker*)

## FEEL GOOD WINTER SOUP FROM CUCINA PARADISO

**Cucina Paradiso's Pasta Fagioli** – From Dennis and Malena Hernandez (chef and owner), in Petaluma.

Shared from *Sonoma Magazine* in January 2021 under *Recreate Warming Soups from Popular Sonoma Restaurants* by Michele Anna Jordon. Makes 4–6 servings.



2 T extra-virgin olive oil

1 yellow onion, diced

1 carrot, diced

1 large celery stalk, diced

1 oz prosciutto, minced

Kosher salt

Black pepper in a mill

A couple pinches of red pepper flakes

8 oz Borlotti beans, soaked in water overnight and drained

1 cup white wine

1 bay leaf

5 cups chicken stock, plus more as needed

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 sprig rosemary

1 sprig sage

1 1/2 cups (6 oz) small dry pasta, such as D'italini or Tripolini, cooked and drained

Parmigiano-Reggiano, in one piece

Small sprigs of rosemary or sage to garnish

Pour the olive oil into a large saucepan or soup pot set over medium-low heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery, and prosciutto, and cook gently until the vegetables soften and release their aromas, about 15 minutes. Stir occasionally and do not let them brown. Season with a few pinches of salt, several turns of black pepper, and a couple of pinches of red pepper flakes. Add the beans and the white wine and continue to cook gently, stirring all the while, for 15 to 20 minutes.

Add the bay leaf and stock and simmer until the beans are tender, about 35 to 45 minutes. Stir occasionally and add more chicken stock, 1/4 cup at a time, if the soup gets too thick.

Meanwhile, pour the extra-virgin olive oil into a small pan, add the garlic and herbs, and set over very low heat for several minutes, until the aromas of the garlic and herbs are released. Strain the oil into the soup.

In a separate pot, cook pasta in boiling salted water until it is al dente. Drain thoroughly and return to the cooking pot. Drizzle the cooked pasta with a bit of olive oil, stir, and set aside until ready to combine with the beans.

When the beans are fully tender, remove the pot from the heat, and use an immersion blender to puree about a quarter of the soup. To serve, stir in the pasta and ladle soup into bowls. Grate Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese over each portion and garnish with fresh herbs.

For additional soup recipes, [Sonoma Magazine](#).

## UPCOMING LOCAL & VIRTUAL EVENTS



**Jazz Honoring Jazz History Month with Len Lyons.** Are you a jazz fan? Attend one of the four classes by an OLLI Jazz Instructor on Zoom, Monday evenings, starting February 1, 2021. Check out the [flyer](#) for details.

**Crossroads Virtual Event TedX Sonoma County** – Saturday, January 30, 1–5p.m. – ticket and event information at: [www.tedxsonomacounty.com/](http://www.tedxsonomacounty.com/).

**Green Music Center Events** – \$10 for virtual shows – [gmc.sonoma.edu/all-events/](http://gmc.sonoma.edu/all-events/) – events include: Jazz at Lincoln Center; Michael Mwenso's Black Music Series; Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Kronos Quartet; Alphabet Rockers; Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Quetzal; and more through April 8, 2021.

**Luther Burbank Center for the Arts** – [lutherburbankcenter.org/events/](http://lutherburbankcenter.org/events/) – check out the Luther Locals and many family events coming up, January through May, 2021.

**Drive Thru, Hot or Cold, Crab Feed, Rohnert Park** – Saturday, February 27, 4:30–7 p.m. – Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce – Tickets: [www.rohnertparkchamber.org/events/](http://www.rohnertparkchamber.org/events/) or call 707-584-1415.

**35: Thirty-Five Artists for Thirty-Five Years** – **FREE** – at the Museum of Sonoma Country through March. Enjoy many of the museums' treasures that haven't been seen in recent years. Go to: [museumsc.org](http://museumsc.org).

**Sonoma State University Economic Outlook Conference** – **FREE** – Tuesday, February 16, 10–11:30 a.m. Register at: [www.NBBJ.NEWS/OUTLOOK21](http://www.NBBJ.NEWS/OUTLOOK21).

**Sonoma State University Music Department events** in February at: <https://music.sonoma.edu/events>.

## OLLI SOCIAL TIME

### OLLI After Hours



**Thursday, February 18 – 4:00–5:00 p.m.**

Time to kick back, enjoy your favorite winter beverage, and chat with OLLI friends. Bring OLLI friends or guests. Link on home page: [olli.sonoma.edu](http://olli.sonoma.edu).

### OLLI Coffee Hour



**Friday, March 5 – 10:00–11:00 a.m.**

Bring your favorite morning beverage and enjoy an hour of Zoom fun with OLLI@SSU friends. Invite OLLI friends or guests. Link will be at [olli.sonoma.edu](http://olli.sonoma.edu).

## SPRING 2021 – SAVE THE DATES

**2020–21 Donor Appreciation Event**  
**March 6** – information coming soon!

**Spring 2021 OLLI Classes**  
**April 12 – May 21**  
+ OLLI Off-Season through June 4

**Summer OLLI Classes/OLLI A La Carte – single course offerings**  
**June 21 – August 6**



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